News-item on Indus river

4649. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report, "Is the Indus river returning home", published in the Hindustan Times dated 11th February, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's perception on the news report;

(c) whether any scientific study has been carried by any Government agency in the matter; and

(d) if so, the results thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) to (d) The news report is not based on any specific study. However, various Organisations namely Space Application Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad; National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA), Hyderabad; and Geological Survey of India (GSI), Kolkata have initiated scientific study after Bhuj earthquake of 26th January, 2001.

Curtailing summer holidays in Schools

4650. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that summer holidays in schools in Delhi are proposed to be curtailed from the next academic year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether representative bodies of teachers, students and the parents have been consulted in the matter and if so, their reaction to the proposal; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Government of NCT of Delhi has informed that there is not proposal for change in summer vacation period or dates.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Seats reserved for foreign students in Technical Institutions

4651. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether as much as 15 per cent of seats in higher education institutions, including technical ones, are being made available to foreign students;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and since when this practice is being followed;

(c) whether it is a fact that there is a stiff competition among the Indian students for seeking admission to technical courses;

(d) whether Government would consider to stop the practice of foreign admissions; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (e) All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) notified regulations in the official gazette on 31st March, 2001 regarding admission of 15 per cent seats in all the AICTE approved institutions on supernumerary basis from amongst foreign nationals/persons of Indian Origin (PIOs). Similarly, in the case of Higher Education, University Grants Commission conveyed its decision on 13th October, 2000 to all the Universities to create 15 per cent supernumerary seats for foreign students (who possess a foreign Passport). Under no circumstances, a seat remained unfilled shall be allocated to any person other than foreign student/ PIO. Factors guiding the decision include helping countries with fewer and less developed facilities in the area of higher education, broadening the horizons of Indian students by exposing them to their counterparts from other countries, fostering understanding among